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House of Representatives

JUSTICE FOR A VIETNAM VETERAN!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, I recently introduced a private bill, H.R. 730, on behalf of a Vietnam War veteran, Fernando Javier Cervantes.

Mr. Cervantes legally entered the United States when he was only 7 years old and has not lived anywhere else since. He has been a legal resident for over 48 years and is married with two children. In 1972, Mr. Cervantes voluntarily enlisted into the United States Army and honorably served

during the Vietnam War, earning a National Defense Service Medal. At the time of enlisting and throughout his service, Fernando was told that he would become a U.S. citizen by serving in the Armed Forces. In July 2008 he was surprised to hear that this was not the case and immediately applied for citizenship. Unfortunately, Fernando's application was denied due to a minor drug possession charge that he received during his difficult readjustment period after returning from Vietnam.

Today, Mr. Cervantes is drug-free and is committed to recovery. If deported to Mexico, Mr. Cervantes would not have any family or community support to recover from his addiction. His entire family resides in the United States as either legal permanent residents or United States citizens. Mr. Cervantes demonstrated permanent allegiance to the United States by voluntarily enlisting into the United States Army and putting his life on the line to make sure we have our freedom. We must allow him the freedom to live in the country he served.